WOMAN'S HOME PAGE

CHARLES DWYER ... Editor.

THE SPRING GOWNS

by HELEN D. PURDY

A WHITE HOUSEDRESS WITH RAT TAIL TRIMMING — THE NEW STRAIGHT LINE COAT
THE NEW MEDIEVAL MODE, WITH OR WITHOUT TRAIN

Latest New York Models Quite "Tailor Made" in Outline: Heavy Embroidery Coming Into Vogue

NOW that the eye has become accustomed to the slender outlines of skirts and sleeves, we can smile at the exaggeration of description with which these style-changes were heralded, and the caricature drawings supposed to represent some of the advance models. It was with the same ridicule, and it seems with more reason, that the seven-yard-around skirts and balloon sleeves of, perhaps, fifteen years ago were introduced, and if we compare the fashion plates of the two periods we must admit that 1909 shows a decided advance in the way of beauty and good taste.

A fitted sleeve is not necessarily a tight sleeve; it may follow the contour of the arm without sacrificing either comfort or appearance. Not so much the sleeve as the waist-line has been the troublous question of the Empire models. Every description accents the so-called "hipless" figure, and when your mirror shows the possession of very evident hips, you feel these gowns are not for you.

There may be a protest at the suggestion for increasing the size of the waist, but that is a part of the plan which, if carried out, will prove its own wisdom. The same arguments of increased waist measure were used when the straight-front line was introduced into the corset, but the result was such a general figure improvement that that feature was forgotten.

Remember that the waist-line is not the entire figure, and that a generally symmetrical effect is to be preferred to a fixed waist-measure. This much of good work in the cause of good looks has the Empire vogue done, though it required demonstration to prove it. Instead of a stout woman getting herself into a costume or coat that curves in at the back and sides to the smallest possible waist, then out again to full round hips, let out the corset until the line is a gradual, not a sharp curve, and have the garment fit easily. If you will look at a figure in what is known as a semi-fitted coat, where the waist-line is only suggested, not defined, you will recognize a nearer approach to slenderness than had seemed possible.

The High Waist-Line

Skirts cut with the high waist-line are becoming more popular every day. They must be mounted on a girdle foundation that fits closely, but the skirt portion is not darted in to a snug fit; it hangs easily from the top of the girdle support. When an outside girdle of ribbon or silk is used, it is drawn snugly at the upper edge, but left moderately loose at the lower, which is really the regulation waist-line. Though the Empire gown proper is long enough to lie on the ground all around, this length is impracticable for any but gowns for indoor wear. The shorter lengths are not awkward, though the average walking length this season is somewhat longer than last year, the skirt just escaping the ground evenly all around.

Nor is the width so great, and gored skirts are more often seen than plaited models. Where a suit formerly meant two pieces—a skirt and coat—the popular form now is called a "three-piece costume," with waist, skirt and coat matching. The waist is not necessarily of the same material as the skirt, nor need it be actually attached to it.

Net dyed in all the staple colors is perhaps first favorite for waists. It harmonizes, for this purpose, with practically any other material, and can be dyed to match any shade. This dyeing is not difficult, and may be done at home. The extremely fashionable sleeves are long, even extending well over the hand, but it seems likely that, for midsummer at least, comfort will make the three-quarter or elbow length popular.

GORGEOUS EMBROIDERY ON NET

Long Coats in Light-weight Gowns

Long coats—40 and 45-inch lengths—and in the semi-fitting models, are being shown for spring, and will probably hold their favor through the summer, especially in linens, pongees and similar light-weight materials. Sleeves on these coats are of the long, close-fitting kind and have very little fulness at the armhole. Small notched collars, similar to those on men's coats, and the collarless finish, will both be used, the latter especially with the ruches of almost every imaginable material now represented among neck accessories.

In woolens there are the transparent fabrics in one class—the voiles and tissues that must be draped over a suitable lining; and the heavier goods, which are usually made with lining in the waist portion only. In these heavier fabrics, though they are of the lightest possible weight, the smooth satin finish is best liked for more dressy wear. Broadcloth has not been displaced, but there is a revival of a material with whose name our grandmothers were familiar—prunella cloth. It is produced in plain colors with a high satin finish, though this season satin-striped prunellas are shown.

THE PEACOCK GOWN

Mohair seems as certain a standby as broadcloth, and though the preference this spring is for a single solid-color cloth, in one of the staple or newer shades, certain diversity is gained by variations in the weaving, as in the checked effect woven into the mohairs and serges with herring-bone stripes. Voiles in plain black and black and white are likely to find increasing favor, and some of these are shown in bordered goods. These are the double-width material with a woven border on one edge. Considerable dressmaking skill is necessary in producing a gown from bordered material; for that reason they will probably never be universally popular.

The Spring and Summer Materials

On these fine, transparent voiles the selvage is often employed as a decorative feature: a tunic drapery, for instance, instead of being hemmed, will be finished with the selvage, left on for that purpose. It is a part of the dressmaker's art to study her material, that she may make the most of all its possibilities. Even if the time has not yet come to wear cotton fabrics the forehanded woman is thinking of them, and this summer she will see the return of an old favorite—cotton sateen, influenced probably by the success of satins and satin-finished woolens. Cotton crepes, too, will follow the lead of the handsome silk crepes, being made up into handsome gowns for the spring. These weaves, from the richest silk to the most inexpensive cotton, are ideal.

Poplins and their near relative, piqué, are used for both children's and ladies' costumes, and in cotton fabrics of this substantial weave the three-piece costume will develop capitally, the coat being cut long and trimmed with self-strappings and pearl buttons. Some bordered piqués are shown, but they will probably be confined principally to children's wear. Printed piqués are comparatively new, especially the designs that alternate a solid color with a floral stripe, both on a white ground. There are the cotton tissues, some of them a woven combination of the finest cotton and silk, and with stripes and dots of the silk thrown up on the dull ground.

Soutache is being pushed somewhat into the background now by the rat-tail braid which Paris and New York dressmakers are putting on smart spring gowns. This new rat-tail braid is much more supple and pliable than soutache and more intricate embroidery effects may be achieved with it. Its pure white, satiny lustre is very effective in this case with a costume of white self-striped mohair. The plain, straight lines of this gown are extremely smart and the heavy cord ornament at the front is a new feature.

The jaunty linen and mohair two-piece suits now being built by custom tailors for summer wear show very straight lines which define the figure scarcely at all. All the new linen coats are quite long, coming to the knee or below, and the skirt beneath is very simply cut, in a gored model. Soutache embroideries make a smart trimming for the linen or mohair coat and skirt suit, and in the case of a washable suit the soutache should be well shrunken before being sewed to the fabric.

The Medieval Mode

The ecclesiastical styles borrowed from the Middle Ages show stoles, surplices and other vestment effects brilliantly wrought with iridescent beads, sequins and the like. The embroidered net stoles, or "tabliers," on the pink satin ball gown shown in the illustration are laced together with fine gold cords and the embroideries are done with iridescent pink beads in round and oblong shapes, the flowers being made of silver and gold ribbons padded into relief effect. Over the shoulders, back and bust are garlands of pale pink and gray-blue silk roses.

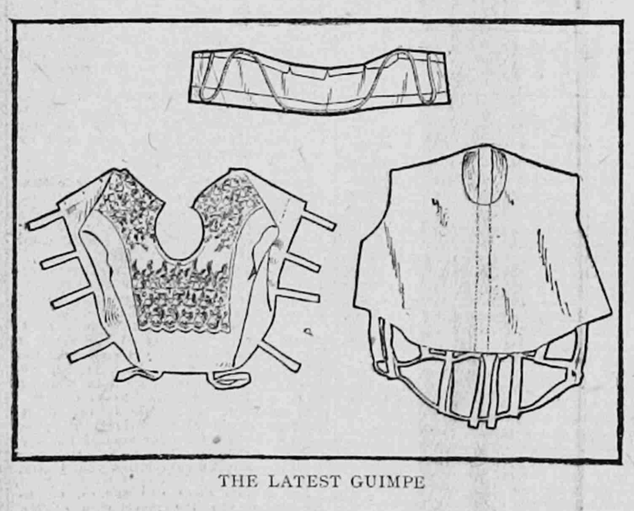
The peacock gown shown here derives its name from the pale peacock blue color of this gown, and the embroidered motif like a spread peacock tail at the end of the train. The material is a bengaline silk in the light blue-green peacock tone and there are appliqués and embroidered patterns in bronze browns and darker peacock blue and green shades. The "alms bag," hung at the side by long chains of silk cord, is a decidedly new style feature, just coming out in Paris.

The most extreme features of the new "medieval" mode, which is prophesied as a follower of the Directoire fashions, are embodied in the costume shown herewith. Here is the long, fitted basque with panel-pleated skirt below it; the square neck and close shoulder line; and notably the elaborate embroidery done with silk and soutache braid on net. This gown, a walking costume of reseda green mohair, has a train attachment which, when fastened to the drop skirt by means of snap catches, changes the little walking dress into a trailing afternoon frock.

A Perfect Fitting Guimpe—Practical Directions for the Making of This Ever Useful Article

THE guimpe or under-blouse is so firmly fixed as a component part of the costume-gown that the best and most practical method of arranging it becomes a question of importance. It is usually made of light, sheer fabric, and if cut by a shirt-waist pattern and allowed to remain the full length, the material at the waist will form an extra thickness under the over-blouse that may just as well be avoided. A shirt-waist of even the simplest description will always be more becoming if it has one wide or several very narrow tucks at the shoulder-line. There may be only three or four of these little tucks, beginning at the armhole, or an equivalent amount of material may be gathered into the shoulder seam, but the trifle of fulness will allow just enough ease across the bust to avoid the strained look that a perfectly plain waist, unless very loosely fitted, is certain to have. The guimpe, on the contrary, will be better if made perfectly plain, for the portion that shows at the centre-front should lie smooth and flat, be the figure either full or slender; the requisite fulness to give ease to the waist will be in the over-blouse.

The guimpe is most often shown to chemisette depth only, but everyone who has tried knows the inconvenience of keeping the small chemisette in position inside a neck opening to which it is not sewed. It will be much more secure and comfortable if it be attached to a guimpe of lawn that may be held down from the waist. The method by which this result may be attained, and at the same time the fulness of material at the waist avoided, is shown in the illustrations. Fit the under-arm seams and the shoulders and neck carefully. French seams may be made, but a felled seam gives a flatter finish at the shoulder. Hem the lower edge, and if the guimpe is to be sleeveless, make a very narrow hem around the arm-holes or apply a narrow bias facing. Hem the lower edge of the guimpe, and sew loops of one-half-inch-wide tape to the edge. Try on the guimpe, and make each tape loop long enough to reach exactly to the natural waist-line. Apply one loop at each side of the centre-front, and one at each side of and quite close to the centre-back. It is impossible to place a loop at the exact centre on account of the closing, but they should be placed as near the centre as possible without interference with the lapping, so that the two loops may pull as one. Place a loop at each under-arm seam and two more at each side of the guimpe, one between the front and the under-arm, and the other between the under-arm and the back, making five loops on each side. Sew them securely to the hemmed edge of the guimpe, and when it is to be worn



THE LATEST GUIMPE

run a length of tape through all the loops and tie it around the waist.

The guimpe is usually cut long enough to extend a few inches below the bust, and continue, on a corresponding line on the figure, across the sides and back, but even if it be cut shorter, the loops will hold it down. The greater length is, of course, preferable when sleeves are included, though in any case it will be more satisfactory to have the guimpe extend at least two inches below the under-arm. When the over-blouse has the large arm-holes that have been so much used this season, the guimpe must have sufficient length to extend a safe distance below them, and it may be advisable to add an extra loop of tape at each side. The guimpe illustrated was made of lining-lawn, and was intended as a support for the lace which is inset in chemisette form—none of the lawn showing when the over-blouse is worn. The guimpe itself, however, may be inset with medallions or insertion or be hand-embroidered. Fine lawn or batiste should be used in this case, but the original preparation of the guimpe would be the same. The trimmings to be applied should be pinned into the desired positions, then basted in place. After the trimming is pinned in place on the one side, double the guimpe evenly through the centre-front, bringing the back and the under-arm seams evenly together, and pin the trimming in the same positions, to the other side.

At the second illustration is shown the method of insetting a solid piece of lace, avoiding a seam at the shoulder. All-over lace may be used, though in this case it was an odd piece of ten-inch deep lace flouncing, the edges being joined at the shoulders by lapping the back portion over the front, and appliquéing the lace design on the latter to the net top of the lace used for the front portion. It is an easy matter, after the guimpe is fitted and the shoulder-seams completed, to fit the lace into place; as no shoulder-seams are made in it, the lapping and joining of the lace may be done wherever it will come most conveniently. Baste the front piece in position first, then each of the back portions. Be careful to preserve the curve of the shoulder-line, notching the lace, if necessary, to secure it. Hem the edges of the lace to the guimpe.

Make the shoulder joinings with over-hand stitches taken over the thread that forms the outline of the lace design, following it far enough around each figure to make the joining secure. Join the spaces of net that come in between these figures by taking short over-hand stitches through both layers of net. After all these stitches are made, trim the net away around the lace figures and along the over-handed lines, but not too close to the sewing in either case. If any of the plain joinings in the lace seem too prominent, they may be broken by taking a small figure from the cuttings of the lace and applying it to the net by over-handing around the design. Run a thread around the lace one-quarter of an inch from the neck edge, to hold it to the same size as the fitted lawn guimpe. From the inside trim away the lawn from under the lace, leaving about one-quarter of an inch beyond the line of sewing that attaches it to the lawn, turn over the raw edges and hem them down to the lawn.

The fitting of the collar is a matter of considerable importance, and more attention than usual is being given to it this season. The shaping of the top outline must necessarily vary on different persons, but the inclination is to slope it up as high at the back and sides as it can be worn. The neck of the guimpe should always be as high as possible at the sides. If, in the fitting, it is too high, causing the shoulder to wrinkle, it is better to slash the edges than to pare them away. A collar that pulls wide at the sides of the neck is uncomfortable and unbecoming. This is particularly true when the neck is short. Increasing the neck-line at the lower edge of the collar increases the apparent size of the neck and is the reverse of the treatment required in fitting a stout neck.

The front may need to be cut somewhat low, but the sides should be kept as high as possible. The best way to make a correct neck-line is by pinning around a well-shaped collar that is either cut from stiff material or boned to preserve the shape. Everyone knows the difficulties of finding a satisfactory and painless collar-supporter. Boning that will hold the collar up usually pokes into the neck in most uncomfortable fashion even when it does not actually scratch. A prepared collar foundation that I have seen, and which has recently been placed on sale in the shops, seems to have solved the problem by boning with a single length of collarbone that is carried up and down and along the shaped collar that is made of mousseline de soie. There are no ends of the collarbone except at each side of the back, and here the ends are turned under three-eighths of an inch, so no sharp points can project. The collarbone is stitched by machine to the mousseline collar. When one of these prepared foundations is used it is fitted to the neck of the guimpe, then covered with lace matching that of the chemisette.

When and What to Write

By Mrs. FRANK LEARNED

"ROSAMOND, dear," said Mrs. Wright, "I have something for you to do this morning."

"What is it, Mother?"

"I want you to be my secretary and attend to some of my notes and invitations."

Rosamond seated herself at her mother's writing-desk, saying, "I like to sit down at your desk, Mother. It is so well supplied with writing materials—note-paper, pens, ink, blotting-paper, stamps—everything ready to use. It makes me feel like writing."

"I want you to begin to-day to keep my desk in order, and to study the details of note-writing, which is an art that should be practised by every woman who wishes to be polite."

"It seems to be a talent to write notes well," said Rosamond with a sigh. "I am afraid I shall never be able to do it."

"Yes, it is an accomplishment. A very small talent can be improved by giving time and thought to it. Everyone may not find it easy to acquire a charming or graceful style in note-writing, but you will find that facility comes by practice."

"What sort of note-paper do you like best?" asked Rosamond.

"Plain white, rather heavy in quality, is always in good taste. Pale gray is used by many people. The size is about six and a half inches by five. You will find a larger size in my desk for letters, and a smaller size, about five inches by four and a half, for short notes or invitations. Note-paper is folded once to fit the envelope. I like to have the address engraved across the top of the note-paper, but it is allowable to write an address at the top, toward the right, if it is not engraved. Remember that a letter is dated at the beginning on the right-hand side; a note is dated at the end on the left-hand side. Very important elementary things in note-writing are hand-writing, spelling, punctuation, correct beginnings and terminations. Be careful always to write legibly and straight. If you are in doubt about the spelling of a word, consult a dictionary. Do not abbreviate."

"What are obligatory notes?" asked Rosamond.

"As a rule, they are replies to anything where a hostess requests the pleasure of your company, or you feel sure that she will wish to know whether she may expect you. For instance, here is an invitation I have just received to a formal luncheon. It is obligatory to reply. Write the reply in the same form as the invitation, in the third person.

> "Mrs. Wright accepts with pleasure Mrs. Robinson's invitation to luncheon on Tuesday, March third, at half-past one o'clock.

"You see that the date and hour must be repeated in the answer, in order to avoid mistakes or misunderstandings."

After Rosamond had written the reply, Mrs. Wright said, "I intend to give a luncheon for my friend, Mrs. Howe. It will be a pleasant way for me to meet some old friends and make new ones. I have consulted with her about the date, and she tells me it is convenient for her. I shall send informal invitations and must write them myself. I shall say:

> "DEAR MRS. ROBINSON:
> Will you give me the pleasure of your company at luncheon on Thursday, March the fifth, at half-past one o'clock? I am asking some friends to meet Mrs. Howard Howe, who has returned recently to town to live, after a long absence, and I hope you can come.
> Yours sincerely,
> "CONSTANCE WRIGHT."

In a little while Rosamond said, hesitatingly, "I want to write to Alice to thank her for the birthday present she sent me."

"Have you forgotten to do so?" asked Mrs. Wright in surprise. "You must not delay another moment."

"No, I had not forgotten, but it is so hard to say the right thing and to say it properly," said Rosamond in a despairing tone.

"Think about it yourself first," replied her mother. "It will help you more in your note-writing if you do that than if I should dictate. Remember that a note of that sort should be your own. A friendly note, a note of appreciation for a gift, should be natural, spontaneous. It must not be abrupt, but it need not be long. It may be enthusiastic without being gushing. Your friend has taken time to think of you, and to choose something which she hopes may please you. I am sure you are not indifferent, but you have allowed three days to pass without acknowledging her present. The simplest rule about writing a friendly note is to think what you would say if speaking. What would you say to Alice if you saw her at this moment?"

"Perhaps I would say, 'Alice, dear, it was charming of you to send me that pretty fan. It is just what I have been wishing for. I am delighted with it——'"

"That is very natural and will do very well. Write it. You may add something of this sort, 'I hope that I may see you soon, when I can tell you personally how much pleasure you have given me,' and sign it 'Yours affectionately.'"

STEAMED FRUIT PUDDING

Sift together one and three-quarter cupfuls of flour, half a level teaspoonful each of soda and cinnamon, and a fourth of a teaspoonful each of cloves and nutmeg; add one and a half cupfuls fruit—raisins, currants and citron mixed—and mix thoroughly. Melt a fourth of a cupful of butter in half a cupful of hot molasses, add half a cupful of milk, and stir gradually into the flour mixture. Turn into well-buttered half-pound cocoa or baking powder cans, and steam about an hour and a half. Serve with hard sauce. Dates or figs chopped fine make an agreeable change in place of the fruits given.

ENTIRE WHEAT PUDDING

Sift together two cupfuls of entire-wheat flour, a level teaspoonful each of soda and cinnamon and half a level teaspoonful of cloves; add a cupful of chopped apples and a cupful of raisins, citron and nuts, mixed. Heat half a cupful of molasses, add a third of a cupful of butter and, when melted, a cupful of milk, then stir gradually into the first mixture. Mold and steam. Serve with hard or lemon sauce. This very excellent pudding, and a most palatable one, requires no eggs, which is a desirable advantage when eggs are scarce and high.